

Recreational Saltwater Fishing Action Agenda (DRAFT)

Guided by the Summit's vision themes, refined objectives, and ranked actions, this draft Action Agenda is NOAA's initial response to the ideas expressed by the recreational fishing community at the Recreational Saltwater Fishing Summit. A living document, the draft Action Agenda defines NOAA's perception of Summit results. The Action Agenda outlines measurable next steps and a process for working with federal advisory bodies, regional offices, and community members. While there is no specific timeline associated with the objectives, the draft document provides for numerous near-term (0-6 months) and long-term actions. It provides a plan of action that can be undertaken in the short-term and serves as a precursor to a more thorough, thoughtful, and farsighted update to the NOAA Recreational Fisheries Strategic Plan. The draft serves as a point of discussion and engagement for MAFAC, its RFWG, the NOAA internal coordination team, and other stakeholders

RELATIONSHIP PRINCIPLES

Although NOAA Fisheries is responsible for implementing much of the Action Agenda, the strategic agenda relies extensively on input and commitment from partner agencies, organizations, and individuals. This involves an honest exchange of ideas and back and forth discussion built on a foundation of trust and respect. NOAA Fisheries believes that an inclusive, proactive, collaborative approach will result in more lasting and acceptable change as well as better solutions to complex challenges.

In particular, NOAA will strive to:

- Provide opportunities for regular, two-way communication.
- Provide communications aimed at clearly answering constituent questions.
- Work within the confines of our legal mandates and established processes, but not use these systems as an excuse for being non-responsive or for failing to consider new ideas.
- Provide information to avoid surprises and ensure stakeholders are aware of the thinking behind Agency decisions.

NOAA Fisheries envisions its relationship with the recreational community as one in which people are confident in the integrity of the information they receive, in which stakeholders are engaged, and one that empowers partners in the science and management of our living marine resources.

Utilize Existing Resources

Dr. Lubchenco created three new support mechanisms to help facilitate constructive conversation and focused action:

- 1) **MAFAC** and its **Recreational Fishing Subcommittee** serve as the Agency's advice and consensus building body and MAFAC's new **Recreational Fishing Working Group (RFWG)** provides additional points of view from a diverse array of national, regional and sector recreational perspectives.

- 2) Likewise, **NOAA Fisheries' internal recreational fishing coordinators** provide regional and office-level points of contact and expertise on recreational fishing issues.
- 3) The **National Policy Advisor for Recreational Fishing** is a new position created to serve as a national point of contact and help the Agency solve problems.

One priority is to identify the roles and responsibilities for each of these three new resources and engage them in the developing and carrying out the next steps. This process is underway.

INITIAL ENGAGEMENT ACTIONS

The following goals, objectives, and actions are based primarily, but not exclusively, upon feedback received from participants of the 2010 Recreational Saltwater Fishing Summit. Specific actions are designed to be implemented or initiated on a short and mid-term timescale. As called for in the individual objectives and action items, more detailed plans will be developed.

Goal #1: Improved Communications

Objective: Have more regular and better communication with recreational fishermen.

- Produce Summit follow-ups including final report, action agenda, Summit web video, and posting of other Summit documents on the NOAA website.
- Create calendar of upcoming recreational events and possible engagement opportunities for NOAA leadership and staff (e.g. Take-A-Kid Fishing Event, ICAST, etc).
- Better engage/partner with state resource agencies in communications efforts.
- Develop a recreational fisheries communications plan including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Identify upcoming critical issues and decision points that may impact recreational fishing to ensure NOAA leadership and stakeholders are aware and understanding of various perspectives.
 - Create a recreational fishing constituent database with current contact information.
 - Elevate profile of Recreational Fishing Services website
 - Contact recreational constituents via email and/or e-newsletter no less than quarterly.
 - Include regular recreational fishing updates in FishNews e-newsletter.
 - Identify and utilized possible internal communication opportunities and resources (e.g. FishCon, library brownbags, regional office/science center open houses).
 - Establish regular communications between NOAA internal rec fish coordination team.
 - Development of communications “tool kits” for NOAA staff on recreational issues
 - Proactively publicize MRIP activities and accomplishments

Objective: Ensure appropriately balanced stakeholder representation in a range of decision-making processes.

- Review 2010 Fishery Management Council nomination packages with regard to inter-sector balance

- Evaluate current Advisory Panels (AP, *e.g.* HMS, NMSP, ICCAT, etc.) for opportunities for expanded recreational participation.
- Identify and contact various recreational fishing AP members to serve as potential ambassadors and information disseminators.
- Engage MAFAC Recreational Fishing Working Group.
 - Identify additional MAFAC RFWG members, including Caribbean representation
 - Revise terms of reference for the RFWG to include new tasking as appropriate to facilitate implementation of this plan.
- Identify ongoing initiatives (NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan, Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (CMSP, etc) and conduct communications to ensure recreational constituents are aware of opportunities to participate.
- Develop strategy to actively engage recreational fishing constituents into CSMP dialogues.

Objective: Increase the number of cooperative research opportunities and partnerships with recreational fishermen.

- Develop an inventory of NOAA programs that provide cooperative research and partnership opportunities and create a process to engage with recreational fishermen on current and other future partnership needs and opportunities.
- Coordinate with NOAA leadership and science team to evaluate potential to partner with Project FishSmart.
- Work with Office of Habitat Conservation to expand recreational stakeholder involvement in the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

Goal 2: Improved Recreational Catch, Effort, and Status Data

Objective: Improve the accuracy, precision, and timeliness of recreational catch and effort data through the implementation of MRIP.

- Secure input from the MAFAC Recreational Subcommittee and RFWG members on developing MRIP plans, priorities, and actions, including updates to the MRIP Implementation Plan; annual priorities for projects and project implementation; new policies and proposed standards and best practices; regional implementation priorities and choices from the MRIP menu.
- Schedule a comprehensive MRIP web-ex briefing for the Subcommittee and RFWG members. Include identification of the upcoming matters on which members' input would be sought, and the likely timetable for seeking this advice. This is likely to include, at a minimum, the following within the next six months: 2010 Implementation Plan Update-August; Report to Congress on MRIP Implementation Status-November/December; FY 2011 research and pilot project priorities-September; implementation of new estimation method to revise Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico estimates for 2003 to 2009-July.

Objective: Increase the frequency of stock assessments of important recreational fishing stocks to support management needs.

- Work with NOAA leadership, science, and budget staff to evaluate current and future budget, and review assessment schedule.
- Work with NOAA leadership, science and budget staff to increase the use of fishery-independent stock assessment technology.
- Identify potential gaps and priority species.
- Communicate science budget and assessment schedule to recreational community, as available.

Goal #3: Improved Social and Economic Data on Recreational Fisheries

Objective: Provide economic data suitable for managers to make allocation decisions and evaluate the impact of regulatory actions on all recreational fishing-dependent businesses.

- Work with the Office of Science and Technology to conduct a gap analysis of current economic programs.
- Coordinate with stakeholders, NOAA economists, Council, and Commission staff to inventory management's need for economic data.

Objective: Improve understanding of human dimensions of recreational fishing (e.g. angler satisfaction, motivations).

- Evaluate state of current knowledge of NOAA and outside social scientists.
- Identify key needs and work with NOAA scientists, Council and Commission social scientists, and outside specialists to prepare a research agenda on human dimensions in marine recreational fishing.

Objective: Understand the socio-economic impacts of Natural Disasters/Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill

- Work with appropriate DOC/NOAA staff, fishery management councils, state agencies, academic institutions, and constituents to fully understand the socio-economic effects of the spill, including the routine collection of baseline social and economic information in advance of future disaster events.
- Work to ensure appropriate consideration of recreational fishing interests in relief/aid packages.

Objective: Review allocation process and goals.

- Incorporate recreational comments on allocation into NOAA Catch Share policy, as appropriate.
- Engage MAFAC and/or others as appropriate, in a review of existing allocation process.

Goal #4: Improved Recreational Fishing Opportunities

Objective: Identify/develop management tools that work best for recreational fisheries.

- Conduct a workshop with fisheries managers and stakeholders to identify best management practices and incorporate economic and human dimension findings.
- Work with Council leadership, states, and NMFS staff to evaluate pilot recreational catch share programs (e.g. GOM red snapper, AK halibut), and to a joint dialogue toward their implementation as pilot programs.
- Engage Council leadership and states in discussions for re-examination of allocations in one or more fisheries for which data are available to compare commercial and recreational value (e.g. summer flounder/GOM red snapper).
- Increase Council awareness of recreational considerations through integration of recreational considerations into NOAA-led Council member training.
- Encourage Councils/Commissions to revisit Fishery Management Plans to incorporate recreational fishing objectives.
- Develop guidance to FMCs on incorporation of recreational goals/objectives for FMPs. Future goals/objectives would address the needs and expectations of recreational anglers as informed by human dimensions research.

Objective: Identify and evaluate potential management alternatives that account for recreational values.

- Identify upcoming opportunities for NOAA and recreational constituent engagement with Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning (e.g. regional planning teams, fishery management councils, etc.)
- NOAA Fisheries coordinate with National Marine Sanctuary Program staff to strengthen ties and identify opportunities for recreational engagement.
- Ensure NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan specifically accounts for the social and economic value of marine recreational fishing.

Goal #5: Institutional Orientation

Objective: Better integrate recreational values into NOAA/NOAA Fisheries' core mission.

- Ensure NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan specifically accounts for values and principles associated with marine recreational fishing.
- Ensure NOAA Fisheries strategic plan appropriately incorporates recreational considerations, goals, and objectives
- Update NMFS Recreational Saltwater Fishing Strategic Plan
- Assess the resources and institutional structure needed to accomplish the goals of the recreational fishing engagement initiative and implement Summit recommendations.
- Evaluate NOAA/NMFS organizational culture with respect to how it values recreation and reflects such value in its planning, operations, etc. Consult with experts who have examined organizational culture and mission priorities in other government organizations (e.g. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) and determine strategies for assuring the organizational culture is aligned with the priorities of this initiative.